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## SPECIAL MEETING, APRIL 19.

The Society held a special meeting this evening, April 19, at the house of the Hon. Josiah Quincy, No. 5, Park Street, Boston. The meeting was called to order at eight o'clock by the President, Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, who remarked, that the Society had been kindly invited by our venerable senior member to meet on the anniversary of the Battle of Lexington; and that it had occurred to him to inquire, as not inappropriate to the occasion, how soon, and under what circumstances, the tidings of that event reached England. He then proceeded as follows:—

In a "Memoir of Elias Hasket Derby," by his grandson, recently presented to our library, we are reminded, that, "by a remarkable concurrence of events, and by the uncommon speed of two ships owned by his father and brother, Captain Richard Derby carried to England the first news of the battle of Lexington; returned to Salem with the first intelligence of the effect it produced in London, which he laid before General Washington at Cambridge; and, at the close of the war, brought to America from France the first news of peace."—P. 28.

In Force's "Archives" (vol. ii. p. 747), under date April 27, 1775, we find the following resolution of the Massachusetts Committee of Safety:—

*"Resolved,* That Captain Derby be directed, and he hereby is directed, to make for Dublin, or any good port in Ireland; and from thence to cross to Scotland or England, and hasten to London. This direction is, that so he may escape all cruisers that may be in the

chops of the Channel to stop the communicating of the provincial intelligence to the agent. He will deliver his papers to the agent on reaching London.

“J. WARREN, *Chairman*.

“P.S. — You are to keep this order a profound secret from every person on earth.” — *Frothingham's History*, p. 85, *note*.

In the same volume, p. 848, is the following: —

“SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE, WHITEHALL, May 30, 1775.

“A report having been spread, and an account having been printed and published, of a skirmish between some of the people in the Province of Massachusetts Bay and a detachment of his majesty's troops, it is proper to inform the public, that no advices have as yet been received, in the American department, of any such event.

“There is reason to believe that there are despatches from General Gage on board the ‘Sukey,’ Captain Brown; which, though she sailed four days before the vessel that brought the printed accounts, is not yet arrived.”

It thus appears, that Captain Derby, sailing four days after the government messenger, had arrived before him; viz., before the 30th of May; and that the ministry had attempted to discredit the accounts which he brought.

This attempt was at once counteracted by our agent at London in the following notice, dated the same day: —

“LONDON, Tuesday, May 30, 1775.

“As a doubt of the authenticity of the account from *Salem*, touching an engagement between the king's troops and the provincials in the Massachusetts Bay, may arise from a paragraph in the ‘Gazette’ of this evening, I desire to inform all those who wish to see the original affidavits which confirm that account, that they are deposited at the Mansion House, with the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor, for their inspection.

“ARTHUR LEE,

“*Agent for the Ho. of Reps. of the Mass. Bay.*”

The authentic despatches were not delivered in London to Lord Dartmouth till the 10th June, when Lieutenant Nunn,

of the navy, arrived with them; and they were published from Whitehall the same day.—*Force*, vol. ii. p. 945.

In the mean time, the previous accounts by Captain Derby had been so far credited, that a special meeting of several members of the Constitutional Society was held at the King's-Arms Tavern, Cornhill, London, June 7, 1775; and a subscription of a hundred pounds voted "to be applied to the relief of the widows, orphans, and aged parents of our beloved American fellow-subjects, who, faithful to the character of Englishmen, preferring death to slavery, were, for that reason only, inhumanly murdered by the king's troops, at or near Lexington and Concord, in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, on the 19th of last April."

"Which sum, being immediately collected," was ordered to be sent to Dr. Franklin.

In illustration of the effect produced in England by the affair of Lexington, we may take the following extract from a letter of Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, dated Strawberry Hill, June 5, 1775:—

"You must lower your royal crest a little; for your majesty's forces have received a check in America. But this is too sad a subject for mirth. I cannot tell you any thing very positively: the ministers,—nay, the orthodox 'Gazette' holds its tongue. This day sennight, it was divulged by a 'London Evening-Post' extraordinary, that a ship, on its way to Lisbon, happened to call at England, and left some very wonderful accounts,—nay, and affidavits,—saying, to wit, that General Gage had sent nine hundred men to nail up the cannon, and seize a magazine, at Concord; of which, the accidental captain owns, two cannon were spiked or damaged. An hundred and fifty Americans, who swear they were fired on first, disliked the proceeding, returned blows, and drove back the party. Lord Percy was despatched to support them: but, new recruits arriving, his lordship sent for better advice, which he received; and it was to retire, which he did. The king's troops lost an hundred and fifty; the enemy, not an hundred. The captain was sent for to be examined, but refused. He says Gage sent away a sloop four days before he sailed: which sloop, I suppose,

is gone to Lisbon; for, in eight days, we have no news of it. The public were desired by authority to suspend their belief: but their patience is out; and they persist in believing the first account, which seems the rather probable, in that another account is come of the mob having risen at New York, between anger and triumph, and have seized, unloaded, and destroyed the cargoes of two ships that were going with supplies to Gage; and, by all accounts, that whole continent is in a flame.

“So here is this fatal war commenced!—

“‘The child that is unborn shall rue  
The hunting of that day.’”

This letter fixes the date of the first publication of Captain Derby's news. “This day sennight,” from June 5, would have been May 29. The subsequent phrase, “eight days,” in Walpole's letter, implies that the arrival was on the 28th May; and we have seen Captain Derby receiving instructions from the Committee of Safety on the 27th of April. The passage must have been less than a month,—a very short for one those days.

The expressions of sorrow and foreboding in Walpole's letter remind us of the fact which the poet Rogers used to tell all his American friends. He remembered, that, when the news of the first blood shed at Concord and Lexington reached London, his own father put on a black suit from that day, and continued to wear it till his death.

There is a characteristic letter from Dr. Franklin to Edmund Burke in this connection:—

“PHILADELPHIA, May 15, 1775.

“DEAR SIR,—You will see by the papers that General Gage called his assembly to propose Lord North's pacific plan; but, before they could meet, drew the sword, and began the war. His troops made a most vigorous retreat,—twenty miles in three hours,—scarce to be paralleled in history. The feeble Americans, who pelted them all the way, could scarce keep up with them.

“All people here feel themselves much obliged by your endeavors to serve them. I hear your proposed resolves were negatived by a

great majority; which was denying the most notorious truths, and a kind of national lying, of which they may be convicted by their own records.

“The Congress is met here pretty full. I had not been here a day before I was returned a member. We dined together on Saturday, when your health was among the foremost.

“With the sincerest esteem, I am ever, dear sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

“B. FRANKLIN.”

Mr. SIBLEY exhibited to the meeting a file of original documents, belonging to the library of Harvard College, relating to the battle of Lexington. Amongst them were the depositions of the inhabitants of Lexington and vicinity, who were eye-witnesses of the engagement and of the conduct of the British troops on their march, given under oath before William Reed, Jonah Johnson, Jonathan Hastings, John Cumming, William Stickney, and Duncan Ingraham, Justices of the Peace for the county of Middlesex, whose authority as justices, and respectability as men, are certified at Charlestown by Nathaniel Gorham, Notary Public.

The file also contained letters from Joseph Warren, — one dated Cambridge, April 27, 1775; the other, May 16, 1775.

Mr. DEANE produced the following letters, copied from the Letter-book of Edmund Quincy, the father-in-law of John Hancock. The Letter-book belongs to the Belknap collection of papers, which has recently come into the possession of the Society.

*Letter from Edmund Quincy to John Hancock.*

LANCASTER, March 25, 1776.

To the Hon. J. HANCOCK, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—Your peculiar favor of the 10th current, per Mr. Avery, came safe to hand; and I am obliged with the same. By it I am pleased to find my last of Feb. 8 was got safe, containing the paper I had supposed was in your hands some months before; and that your health permitted your so close attention. I hope my last, of 18th current, will arrive the ensuing week, having therein advised you of the cowardly evacuation of the fortress of Boston; and of the king's ships hurrying out of the harbor; and of the operation of our D[orchester]-Hill formidable batteries to the enemy's consternation, erected principally in one night by the well-timed assistance of four hundred carts and wagons of timber fixed for the purpose, and other materials of defence, by which intrenchments were effected sufficient to stand every supposable kind of attack or opposition of the enemy; whose numbers, as we now learn, were — effective and non-effective men — no fewer than seven thousand five hundred. It also appears that the Tory gang had, for a month before, such warning, that they had hired several vessels for their own safety, which lay ready, under pay, to take them, bag and baggage, and make their exit with the fleet upon the earliest notice of a necessity of evacuating the town; which General Howe, with his Council, determined upon, after an application to G[eneral] Washington for five days' cessation of arms, at the end whereof G[eneral] Howe promised to leave the town. To which G[eneral] W[ashington] politically answered in the negative, and added that he would sooner run the risk of sacrificing fifty thousand men in storming the fortress, &c. Howe was all the time making preparation to be gone, which they say was much accelerated by an accidental fire among several of Prospect-Hill barracks some nights before, which

Howe supposed was an alarm to the inhabitants to come in next day in order to accomplish G[eneral] W[ashington]'s menace before mentioned. It is certain he was under great surprise, upon the whole; for it is confidently reported, he, staying among the latest embarkations, rode the last day, with apparent haste, down to the wharf where the boat lay for him; in which he made so much haste to get, that he fell into it, as was observed by curious people near: whether hurt or no, we have not heard. Another mark of precipitation is, that the ships went down without taking on board their water, — at most, not a *quantum sufficit*, — and have been observed watering, some days since their departure.

26th. We are advised this day, that the ships were yesterday below, and supposed by some to be waiting the arrival of an expected fleet from G[reat] B[ritain], and with them to proceed to the southward. Others suppose they have, in such case, a further design upon Boston: but this seems very improbable; for they must be convinced, by what they have seen and heard, that there, our fortifications, put into a good posture of defence, — together with the batteries erected and erecting on D[orchester] Hills, and other eminences without the town, on Fort Hill and at Castle William, as I am told, — can afford them but little encouragement to retake a fortress, which they have so lately judged untenable against the force they may now suppose to be in possession, and which may be not only augmented as G[eneral] W[ashington] sees fit, but also as well supported in all respects as may be needful. No: I think their views cannot be against Boston, and therefore imagine New York may be their chief object. However, it is probable they may divide their force of ships and troops among several of the more Southern Colonies, where Dr. Y.\* informs me they are making, and have already made, such preparations as to give them a smart drubbing, come when

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\* Probably Dr. Thomas Young. — See Works of John Adams, vol. ix. pp. 617, 623.



they will; and I hope they may be treated as they deserve. I am fully of opinion, administration is already very heartily sick of their scheme of subjugation, and of their principal advisers from hence; and doubt not but both Bernard and Hutchinson in particular have lately undergone such profuse sweatings at court as more than preponderate all their profits and honors: and they must expect a repetition of them, if nothing worse, should the Continental force this year discourage all further proceeding against the A[merican] Colonies, and render the British hopes, as to the same, desperate, — not only of a subduction, but likewise of every kind of governmental control. And truly I think that the member of the House of Commons, who, in a ludicrous manner, inquired at “what time the Americans were emancipated,” might have saved himself the trouble by looking into Sir William Blackstone’s Commentaries, vol. i. p. 233, upon the duties of kings; where he would have found it to be a maxim of common law, that, when protection ceaseth, allegiance ceaseth to be the duty of the subject. Now, it being evident that the British king had, at the time of inquiry, not only withdrawn his protection from these Colonies, — which, truly, was only negative, — but that he had positively commenced hostilities, of which there can be no dubious construction. Hostilities were not only commenced, but violently and unmercifully prosecuted, maugre our most devout supplication; to which we have had the mortification of repeated refusal, with contempt and abuse. And, as this is the case, the querist might have known, without going off his seat, the time of emancipation was then arrived; and every step since taken by the British administration are so many repeated corroborations of the subject’s present and future right, or Lord Coke, as well as Sir William, have been grossly mistaken in a fundamental article of the British Constitution. Probably the warm member above referred to — for I now forget his name — might, if present, tell us that the relation between

the king and his Colonies was very different from that between the government of Great Britain and the British subjects, as the latter were by compact entitled to the franchises of Englishmen, and therefore had a right to insist on protection, and to make it the condition *sine quâ non* of their allegiance; but that the Colonies were at the king's disposal, and that *he*, with his omnipotent Parliament, had always, now have, and ever ought to have, an absolute right to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever, even to deprive them of their natural rights, as, if I mistake not, T. H.\* said once in your hearing. Consequently, I suppose the said member was of a similar opinion; which made him use the common word for manumitting a son or a slave among the Romans. And, if this was really the general opinion of the British Legislature, it is indeed full time that we should oblige them to come to an *éclaircissement* upon the important subject; and, at present, I can see nothing will answer the end so well AS A DECLARATION TO ALL THE WORLD OF OUR ABSOLUTE INDEPENDENCY *sub nomine divino*, which will soon attract a limited commercial correspondence with as many other independent States as may be like to comport with the true interest of our own, which we must be now convinced cannot well comport with the control of any other upon the earth. Providence hath, in his great wisdom and goodness, assigned us a part of the globe between three and four thousand miles distant from the nearest European States, chiefly situated between thirty and forty-seven degrees north latitude, affording a number of excellent climates; the most northern, in great part, answering the just expectation of the husbandman; and the most southern by no means encouraging indolence from spontaneous productions of support, but all must labor, or take care to keep others at work for them, and therefore very averse to raise and support such a power

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\* Thomas Hutchinson (?).

among them as shall, *ad libitum*, demand what proportion of the fruits of their labor he or they shall think proper. And therefore, considering the distance from Europe; the number and variety of the climates; the necessity of labor; the almost certain support for all who do labor; the natural production of every needed material for a commercial and naval power, and for the defence of the inhabitants against all invaders whomsoever, with the singular advantage of not less than seventeen or eighteen hundred miles seacoast; the many large and long navigable rivers at convenient distances; banks, near the coast, affording very encouraging fisheries of the smaller sorts; and the Atlantic Ocean still open for the whale-fishery, with which we are better acquainted than any other people,—I say, considering all these natural and political advantages, besides many others not mentioned, I will venture to say that we have an indefinitely better prospect of success, in every respect, in a disjunction of these American States from the government of Great Britain, than any other people upon the globe who have separated from the governing country ever had.

Besides, the dispute is risen to so great a height, and the contest become really so hot, that all political application must of course melt before it; and the wounds given and received are so deep, that I fear no political probe will be capable of reaching to the bottom. As my Tory cousin, Samuel Q., said to yourself, Dr. Cooper, me, and many others, after dinner (*chez lui*, 1774), with a certain air of assurance, "*Gentlemen, the die is cast!*" so I believe many of his kidney assured themselves that it was cast in their favor. I am sorry for his mistake, with that of many others, strangely confident of victory (*sine clade*). Such was the *happy contempt* of the American soldiery, through as *happy* misrepresentations repeated from hence by the ministerial darlings, which have been really, in the result, very advantageous to the *American cause*. Such has often been the case where the

moral as well as political rights of the innocent part of mankind have been wrongfully assailed. "*Right* will strongly unite, cement, and combine, by a mutual association and assistance, those who shall act under its banners; while *wrong* shall naturally, on the contrary, confound and weaken with disunion, dissension, and disturbances among themselves, *those* by whom it shall be unhappily adopted." I apprehend, the truth of this observation has been frequently remarked by those who are devout observers of "*the ways of God to man.*"

Remarkable, indeed, are the steps of Divine Providence in the late signal deliverance of the first and most persecuted city of the North-American Colonies, since the flames of the British wrath have been kindled against them. The event of so peaceful an evacuation is truly wonderful, as we have reason to think a large effusion of blood has been prevented, not only from both the contending parties, but likewise from the inoffensive and innocent inhabitants of the town, who must have abided the woful consequences of the storm, which we must suppose would have been otherwise very soon determined upon. By this means, probably most, or a greater part, of the dwellings have been preserved. By the same means, sir, the large real estate which you had so generously *resigned to the flames*, the same kind Providence, I hope and trust, hath reserved to you and yours. May the same all-wise Disposer of our respective lot and portion on this transitory stage of life sanctify his various dispensations to us, and, whether they may be for the present joyous or grievous, yield us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! May your health be restored, and your life prolonged yet many years in the restoration and enjoyment of public peace and private happiness, as a temporal reward of your singular patriotic care and concern for the real interest of your native country! and, at the close of the scene in this probationary state, may we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!

I thank you for your hint to Dr. Y. of writing me, under the cover, the political news of the day. I have made return in the enclosed, and have also wrote my daughter the domestic occurrences; to which I beg leave to refer you, and to assure you, that I remain, with the most sincere respect and esteem, dear sir, your most affectionately obliged friend and father,

E. Q.

P.S.—I thank you for the k[ing's] silly proclamation, in which I observe a reference to an Act made to repeal the Boston Port Bill, &c., and to empower the k[ing's] commissioners to grant the colonists pardon of their rebellious proceeding, &c.,—one bait of a hook ready gauged; but hope will not be a catcher of men of high or low degree. As I live so much out of the road of news, I would ask the favor of your spouse's care to forward me, under your name, some of your perhaps neglected Philadelphia papers of weeks past, especially such as contain any advices of consequence.

30th.—Added particular advices respecting the town and H.'s interest,—the 22,000 bushels wheat, blankets, coal, artillery, left; 9,335 hundred-weight mortar and bed; the fortifications going forward,—Fort Hill, Castle, Governor's Island, &c., &c. Offered my service to go to Boston, if it might be of service to him, &c. Recommended perusal of the D. of R.'s Considerations on Present Measures, especially pp. 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40,—all very consolatory to the Americans in their design (*Deo volente*) of revolting from G[reat] B[ritain], as H[ollan]d did \*\* from Spain. Also noticed the news of G[overnor] Martin's defeat.

Wrote at same time, and enclosed, a letter to daughter Hancock, in which I acquainted her as follows; viz., of her sister G.'s\* writing her. Refer her to Dr. Y.'s letter, and to Mr. H[ancock]'s above, for political. That her sister

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\* One of Mrs. Hancock's sisters married William Greenleaf, Sheriff of Worcester, in 1763.

S.\* at London, with family, had been inoculated, and were well, as we hear; for which I am thankful. Of Mr. Abel Willard and his brother going off to Halifax. Noticed the signal protection of H[ancock] in the evacuation of the fortress of Boston. My opinion as to this being the time for independency of these Colonies to take place, &c., for many reasons. Wrote about S. Sewall's request of a good berth anywhere, if he could be supported in a public or private school, or gentleman's family for instructing of his children; and desired Mr. H[ancock]'s arrival as soon as may be. Of the ships leaving Boston Harbor yesterday, except one and a tender. Mentioned D. Barret's loss of goods to a great value. Our want of flax in these parts, or would go to spinning. To send me newspapers or other publications; and to put Dr. Y. upon writing frequently of occurrences, especially what relates to French proceedings, either from F[rance] or W[est] Indies. That we hope them as speedy return as may be consistent with public good, &c., &c.

*Letter from Edmund Quincy to Madam Lydia Hancock.†*

LANCASTER, March 30, 1776.

To Madam LYDIA HANCOCK.

DEAR MADAM,—Since my last, I have between three and four months been in expectation of informing you either of the evacuation of the distressed town of Boston by the ministerial miserable army under G[eneral] Howe, or of our G[eorge] W[ashington] storming the fortress; unless, agreeable to first design, he should, by cannonading and bombarding the town, oblige him to a surrender. It was expected he would have attempted the latter in the winter season; but

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\* Esther Quincy, sister of Mrs. Hancock, married Jonathan Sewall, who went to England early in 1775.

† The widow of Thomas Hancock, who died Aug. 1, 1764. Mrs. Hancock was, at the date of this letter, residing at Fairfield, Conn.

the ground being so hard frozen that the making strong intrenchments would have been very fatiguing, with some other impediments, caused a delay till about the beginning of this month; when he began to bombard and cannonade from the intrenchments which he had completed nearest to the town, by which H[owe] became sensible he had to do with people who understood their business, and were resolutely determined to do his before they left him. By about the 12th current, W[ashington] took possession in the night of the heights of Dorchester, ranging between the southern batteries and Castle William (since destroyed by the enemy), having prepared timber and fascines for the defence of his men. By or before the morning, had a strong breast-work in two lines, — one facing the town and harbor; the other, H[owe's] batteries, &c., upon the Neck, with artillery mounted; and finished great part of their intrenchments by the vigorous labor of two or three thousand men, and, they say, four hundred carts and wagons, employed the day before at a distance, and came to their proposed works after it was dark. The rise of such a prodigious piece of work in one night vastly surprised both the admiral and general, and put the latter upon sending proposals to our general for a cessation of arms, for, I think, four or five days; which he refused absolutely, and returned H[owe] for answer, that he would sooner run the risk of fifty thousand men in storming the fortress than allow him any time. And this he intended soon to do if he did not quit the town, and also to do his utmost to destroy the king's ships then before the town. About the same time, in the night, it providentially happened that a number of the barracks upon Prospect Hill, so called, in Charlestown, were burnt down; making a great light, seen in Boston, and by H[owe] and Co. supposed to be a beacon to notify the towns about to send in their militia, &c., as speedily as possible, in order to the *storm threatened*. Upon viewing the D[orchester] intrenchments, the admiral grew very

uneasy with the general, and told him, as we hear, that, if he did not endeavor to drive the enemy — i.e., *the rebels* — from those intrenchments, he should leave him to himself, as it was not safe for the king's ships to lie above the Castle (and, indeed, he was right), which caused Howe to parade several thousands of his troops in the Common for the purpose; but, as it is said, the remembrance of B[unker]-Hill quarrel was so fresh in their minds, that the general met with a refusal. And, indeed, they judged very properly, as the attempt would have been attended with more imminent hazard; success being scarcely possible, the intrenchments were so strong, and would have been defended with ten times the force and judgment than they had to oppose at B[unker] Hill: and of this they were fully sensible, — both officers and soldiers. However, it was given out that H[owe] made a second attempt, and was coming out; but the winds were too high! Yet I imagine it was too much upon *the forlorn hope*; and as most of them, I have much reason to think, judged the *cause* they were embarked in to be really in the sight of Heaven unjustifiable, neither one nor the other inclined to venture *so large a stake*, but rather to submit to the indignity of a speedy evacuation. And I wish that had been the lowest stoop they have made: for, when resolved and preparing to be gone, they degraded themselves so far as authoritatively to demand goods out of shops of the peaceable inhabitants, who summered and wintered with them, and deserved protection; and, by the same military authority, they demanded keys of stores, in which, they had been informed, much goods were left by those who had retired into the country. And, among the large sufferers, I am told your friend D. Barret is the largest; and hope, as it is only a part of his worldly substance, he will be suitably affected with the kind dispensation of P[rovidence] in reserving to him and family so large a proportion at a time when others have lost *all*, or perhaps more than *all*, that they really owned in the world, and are



left naked and destitute. I presume that D. was not so happy as to owe much to his agents in G[reat] B[ritain]. If he really owed £10,000, he would have a just right to order his friends to apply to the king's exchequer for the sum lost, or not to order it at all, at least for the present, for this reason especially,—that, had the merchants of London consented to promote the unjustifiable system of the B[ritish] ministry against the Colonies, the court of G[reat] B[ritain] would have been at first discouraged and diverted from their impolitic and tyrannical projection; and herein those merchants would have proved themselves not only friends to the commerce, but to the whole interest, of the B[ritish] nation, as they must be very soon clearly convinced, by the fatal issue of their ill-judged support, when it shall appear to them that they have irretrievably lost all the Colonies, with the control of the whole commerce; which, if the civil war is further continued, must inevitably be the case; as, indeed, indignation on the one side, and just resentment, resistance, and opposition on the other, are now risen to such a height, that submission on the most favorable terms which G[reat] B[ritain] will deign to offer or comply with would be really unsafe, and might, in the course of things, subject the Colonies to a far more dangerous condition than they have been in heretofore. But I am fully persuaded, *that the set time is come*, and that the all-wise Governor of men and things hath already clearly pointed it out in the seasonable and extraordinary assistance which *he* has been pleased under our peculiar embarrassments graciously to afford us. We must confess, they not only surmount all our public merits, but also every thing which we had any reason to expect or hope for. With the Psalmist, “we may sing unto the Lord; for he hath dealt bountifully with us.” If we may not say with him, that “he hath not dealt so with any nation,” we may yet venture to say, that he hath seldom dealt thus with any except “his chosen people.” May we have the favor of be-

coming such, under his chastening hand, that "he may heal the broken in heart, and bind up their wounds;" that "he may build up the waste places" of our capital, and "gather together the outcast of his people"! And as our deliverance thus far has been attended with such marks of the *Divine superintendency*, unless forfeited by pride and vainglory, we may hope and trust, that, with his "mighty power and stretched-out arm," the Almighty will complete the salvation and deliverance of his people, throughout this whole continent, from the cruel and iniquitous hand of *those*, who, without the least pretence or shadow of justice, have, in so violent and unprecedented a manner, risen up against them.

We just now received advice of Governor Martin and his regulators being defeated at North Carolina, and expect a similar account of the E[arl] of Dunmore, the atrocious criminal of Virginia, and of Governor Carlton at Quebec.

My son G.\* this day returned from Boston, and tells me your m[ansion]-house, with the outside fences and the stables, &c., appear to be in good order: and I am informed by one Mr. Williams, who was in Boston the day after evacuation, and was assured, that General Pigot, who lived in the house, I think, during the w[inter] season, had left it in a cleanly state; and, further, that the wine and other stores had been left as he found them; which I have advised Mr. H[ancock] of. Hope may prove true. I rejoice with you both in the good hand of a kind P[rovidence], who has seen fit (in mercy, I hope) to spare from the *flames* (to which your nephew wrote me, eighth current, that he had resigned the whole interest, then expecting to hear of its consumption) so large an estate as you had there. And upon the whole, notwithstanding the permitted violence of the invaders in the destruction of so great a part of the town, the inhabitants have great cause of thankfulness for the preservation of so large a part of the

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\* Probably son in-law Greenleaf.

most valuable real interest of the place; and I would hope, that, as the past severe trials (though from the wicked hand of oppression and injustice) spring not out of the dust nor come out of the ground, the respective sufferers will religiously and cheerfully commit their cause unto *Him* "who executeth judgment for the oppressed, and giveth food to the hungry," and confide in him; that their losses will, in his own due time and way, be abundantly remunerated to them or theirs in *this world*, or infinitely compensated in the blessings of the *future*; agreeable to what the apostle assureth us, "that our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, which are temporal; but at the things which are not seen, which are eternal." A noble support of the faith of the *real Christian*, under the chastening dispensation of an all-wise and gracious Providence; and I trust there have been and are many such in and of the late distressed and afflicted town of your *nativity*. And may God of his infinite mercy grant, that his judgments, which are so visible abroad on the earth, may effectually cause the inhabitants of that town (formerly so much noted for religion and morals) and of the whole land to learn righteousness! And may *he* thereupon early restore peace in our borders, preserve health in our habitations, and in great favor give us such seasonable seedtime and so plentiful an harvest as that there may be no complaining of want in our streets! We have yet two or three king's ships lying below; we suppose, to give intelligence of the late evacuation, and of the destination of the fleet. We suppose them to be gone to H[alifa]x, to lie there till the next arrives from E[ngland]. Probable, unless a war calls them home, they will, in separate squadrons, harass the *A[merican]* coasts, and spread desolation among the indefensible seaports. I hope there are not many such. As to their landing armies

in any of the Colonies, they are by this time, and will be, so fully apprised of our being prepared almost everywhere to receive them, that they will avoid enterprises on shore as much as may be. Your nephew informs me, that, in the Southern Provinces, they are prepared and preparing to give them a drubbing wherever they come. Our people are erecting such batteries on Long Island and other places as probably will drive every foreign vessel out of the harbor, and prevent their future entrance. The works already erected on D[orchester] Hill, and erecting on Fort Hill in Boston, on Castle Island, and proposed on Governor's Island, and elsewhere near *the town*, I hope, will (under Divine Providency) be an adequate defence against every future invader of its tranquillity. But may the inhabitants, through the spiritual counsels of the teachers, by the powerful influences of the Spirit of Truth, be enabled "to put on the whole armor of God, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"! Boston must, for some time at least, be continued a garrisoned town, but for its defence, and not its *annoyance*; and, I trust, under such regulation and control of the civil law and magistrate as may prevent the usual licentiousness in such a case.

My last advice from P[hiladelphia] was the tenth current. Then your nephew and niece were in usual health; the former amazingly active in the continental affairs, considering the slender state of his health, which we hope action may have a tendency to restore, or continue as it is. My daughter K. regrets the distance of your situation, having not received the least advice of your health for near six months. This, I hope, may find you in a better state of health than you have usually enjoyed for some years. I presume you will have no thought of leaving Fairfield till your N. and N.\* shall be

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\* Probably "nephew and niece."

able to quit Philadelphia; which, I hope, may be the ensuing summer,—perhaps sooner, if any European war should be commenced sooner; which is not improbable. But these things are in the hands of the all-wise superintending Governor of the universe, who, we trust, will, in his infinite goodness, allot such an issue to our present A[merican] disturbances as may tend to the advancement of his *own glory, universal peace and good-will among men*. We may especially hope that a happy change in the Constitution of these Colonies may, without a repeated control of the B[ritish] Court for the sake of prelacy, spread the knowledge of civil life, and of the genuine principles of Christianity, through all the native tribes of North America; that they may be effectually instructed and persuaded “to beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and to love or *learn war no more*.”

My son and daughter G., sister K. and niece, join in sincere respect and regard to yourself, Mr. B. and lady, with, dear madam, your most obliged friend and very humble servant,

E. Q.

This being open for want of conveyance,—April 2,—I noted to Mr. Hancock the news of the regulars landing at Newport.

[For the following notice of Edmund Quincy, the writer of the foregoing letters, and of his brother, Josiah Quincy, merchants and copartners, the Society is under obligation to Miss Eliza Susan Quincy, of Boston:—

From the correspondence of Messrs. Edmund and Josiah Quincy, it is evident they ranked high among the active and enterprising merchants of Boston in the last century. The former was graduated at Harvard in 1722; the latter, in 1728. In 1737, when Josiah Quincy accompanied his father, Judge

Edmund Quincy, to England, their mercantile relations were already extensive; and it appears they were engaged in ship-building, as he immediately contracted to build a vessel of two hundred tons for a London merchant, to be employed in the whale-fishery. After the death of his father, in February, 1738, Josiah Quincy visited Holland and France, and established correspondences in Cadiz and Paris; in Amsterdam, with the Messrs. Hope; in London, with Slingsby Bethel (Lord Mayor in 1756). In the West Indies, their correspondents were the Messrs. Lloyd; in Newport, Rhode Island, Messrs. Channing and Chaloner. Among the numerous names on their account-books, those of Sir William Pepperell, and Colonel Dwight of Berkshire, frequently occur. From the former they received the produce of the fisheries for exportation; and the latter was their agent for the care of one thousand acres of land in Lenox, granted to the heirs of Judge Edmund Quincy by the Legislature of Massachusetts, out of gratitude for his public services. Josiah Quincy again visited Europe in 1740, '42, '48; and in a letter to his brother, dated "Paris, 1748," he states that his object in visiting that city was to obtain "a contract from the French Government for supplying their garrison at Louisburg with provisions, *when it is restored to them*. I have had an audience of Count Maurepas, who seemed inclined to accept my proposals; but there is a delay in the affair, on account, as I imagine, of some new difficulties between the plenipotentiaries at Aix la Chapelle. I am also soliciting a contract in England to supply the intended settlement at Cape Sable." During this visit to Paris, a letter from Mr. Bethel, dated "London, Aug. 25," informed him that "the ship 'Bethel,' belonging to the firm of Edmund and Josiah Quincy and Edward Jackson, had taken at midnight, without firing a single gun, a Spanish register ship, with one hundred and seventy thousand dollars in gold on board, beside a cargo valued at three hundred thousand; altogether amounting, in probable value, to a hun-

dred thousand pounds sterling." England being then at war with Spain, the ship was carried into Fayal, and condemned as a lawful prize. A letter from Benjamin Pratt, afterwards Chief-Justice of New York, to Josiah Quincy, proves that this transaction was regarded in a favorable and honorable light by that eminent lawyer.

Josiah Quincy returned to Boston in 1749, and soon after dissolved partnership with his brother, and retired to Braintree. In Boston, his residence was in a large mansion (yet standing) in Washington Street, south of the entrance to Central Court.

Edmund Quincy, at that period, resided in a house opposite Trinity Church, in Summer Street, which afterwards became the property of Samuel Salisbury. He entered into partnership with his sons, lost his property, and, in 1769, sold his father's house and estate in Braintree. This mansion, which equals those erected by the Vassals in the beginning of the last century, yet stands in good preservation (1859). During the remainder of his life, Edmund Quincy resided in Boston. He published "A Treatise on Hemp Husbandry," and found resources in a taste for classical and general literature. For many years he was a magistrate of the county of Suffolk, and enjoyed the respect of his fellow-citizens.

Josiah Quincy, in 1752, entered into business with General Palmer, and established the first glass-works in America, and spermaceti-works on a peninsula in Braintree, — now Quincy, — which, from a colony of Germans they employed as workmen, has received the name of Germantown. Both enterprises were terminated by the American Revolution. In 1755, he was appointed, by Governor Shirley, on a commission with Thomas Pownall, to solicit the Colony of Pennsylvania to unite with Massachusetts in sending an expedition to erect a fortress near Ticonderoga. At Philadelphia, he formed an acquaintance with Benjamin Franklin, which resulted in a

permanent friendship.\* After the loss of two houses by fire, he erected, in 1770,—on his portion of a tract of land purchased by his ancestor, Edmund Quincy, in 1635, of an Indian sachem,—the mansion now the summer residence of his grandson Josiah Quincy. There he resided during the American war; and, from one of his letters to General Washington, it appears that Franklin and Bowdoin, with Dr. Cooper and Dr. Winthrop, visited him in October, 1775, and that “their conversation turned on the cruelty they were daily suffering from the vengeance of a tyrannical government.”

Josiah Quincy was described by John Adams as distinguished for polished and graceful manners, and for the elegance of his dress and appointments. He lived to witness the termination of the contest for independence; and, although his property was lessened by the Revolution, he left at his death, in 1784, a valuable estate. His brother, Edmund Quincy, with whom he always sustained an affectionate friendship, survived him, and died in 1788, at the age of eighty-five.]

On the table in front of the President was placed a beautiful antique breast-pin, having on the front a device,—an eagle driving away a lion, with a liberty-cap in view; and, on the back, beneath a glass covering, the hair of the proscribed patriots, Samuel Adams and John Hancock. This pin is the property of F. O. Prince, Esq., having been transmitted to him by Marshall James Prince.

A still more precious relic attracted the attention of the members: this was the gorget of General Wash-

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\* See Franklin's Autobiography.



ington, a description of which is given below, in Mr. Quincy's own words.

The gorget of General Washington was a part of his uniform, when, as colonel in the service of the State of Virginia, he served under General Braddock in the war of 1756; having the arms of the State of Virginia engraved thereon. It is represented in the engraving of Washington at the age of forty, and forms the frontispiece to the first volume of Mr. Sparks's "Life of Washington."

This precious relic came to my possession under the following circumstances: From 1805 to 1813, I was one of the representatives of the State of Massachusetts, in the Congress of the United States, from Suffolk District. During these years, I had the happiness, with my wife, to form an acquaintance with Mrs. Martha Peter (formerly Custis), the wife of Thomas Peter, Esq., of Tudor Place, in the District of Columbia. There sprang up between both families — particularly between Mrs. Peter and my wife — a great intimacy, the result of mutual respect and also co-incidence in political feeling and opinion, which, at that period, constituted a bond of great strength. She was a woman of great personal beauty, highly accomplished, intellectual, elevated in spirit and sentiment, and worthy of the relation which she held of grand-daughter to George Washington.

When in 1813, on resigning my seat in Congress, I called at Tudor Place to take leave, Mrs. Peter, after stating the interest she felt in me and Mrs. Quincy, asked my acceptance of the "gorget of Washington, with the ribbon attached to it, which" she said "she had received at the division of her grandfather's estate." About that time, there had been formed in Boston a political association bearing the name of the Washington Benevolent Society, having for its object the support of the views and principles of Washington; of which I was one of the Vice-Presidents: and I immediately suggested the

propriety, and asked her leave, to present, in her name, that precious relic to that society. She expressed her gratification at the suggestion, saying, "that she knew of no place where the principles of Washington had been more uniformly cherished, or were likely to be more highly prized or preserved longer, than in the town of Boston."

Accordingly, on my return in April, 1813, I made a formal statement of the above circumstances to the Washington Benevolent Society, and presented the gorget, in her name, to that society. The gift was gratefully and formally received and acknowledged by a vote of the society, signed by Arnold Welles, President; and William Sullivan, Josiah Quincy, Samuel Messinger, John C. Warren, and Benjamin Russell, Vice-Presidents. A record of the gift, of the vote of thanks, and of all the proceedings, was written upon parchment, and deposited in a box especially adapted for its preservation, and an account of the doings of the society officially transmitted to Mrs. Peter.

The gorget remained in that situation, under the care of the society, for five or six years, until its final dissolution, when, by a vote of the society, it was formally placed in my custody; and I immediately wrote to Mrs. Peter a statement of the circumstances, offering to return the gorget to her. She was pleased to reply, that it was her wish that I should retain it in my possession, and make such disposition of it as I saw fit.

Mr. QUINCY read, from the third volume of a series of diaries kept by his father, an animated description of the riot excited by opposition to the Stamp Act, during which Governor Hutchinson's books and papers were destroyed; of the appearance of the Chief-Justice, the subsequent day, in court; and of his remarks on that occasion. This account was written when his father was twenty-one years old. It is dated Aug. 27, 1765,

the day after the disturbance; and closes with very spirited comments, in the peculiarly forcible style of the distinguished author, on the value and abuses of liberty.

Mr. Quincy has kindly furnished for the Proceedings the extracts from his father's diary referred to as above:—

Aug. 27, 1765.—There cannot, perhaps, be found in the records of time a more flagrant instance to what a pitch of infatuation an incensed populace may arise than the last night afforded. The destructions, demolitions, and ruins caused by the rage of the Colonies in general—perhaps too justly inflamed—at that singular and ever-memorable statute called the Stamp Act, will make the present year one of the most remarkable eras in the annals of North America. And that peculiar inflammation, which fired the breasts of the people of New England in particular, will always distinguish them as the warmest lovers of liberty; though undoubtedly, in the fury of revenge against those who they thought had disclaimed the name of sons, for that of enslavers and oppressive tax-masters of their native country, they committed acts totally unjustifiable.

The populace of Boston, about a week since, had given a very notable instance of their detestation of the above unconstitutional Act, and had sufficiently shown in what light they viewed the man who would undertake to be the stamp distributor.\* But, not content with this, the last night they again assembled in King's Street; where, after having kindled a fire, they proceeded, in two separate bodies, to attack the houses of two gentlemen† of distinction, who, it had been

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\* Andrew Oliver, Esq., Secretary of the Province, whose loss was estimated, by the Committee of the Council, at £129. 3s. sterling.

† Benjamin Hallowell, Esq., Comptroller; and William Storey, Esq., Deputy-Registrar of the Admiralty. The loss of Mr. Hallowell was estimated by the aforesaid Committee at £412. 9s. 1d. sterling; and Mr. Storey's, at £102. 1s. 6d. sterling.

suggested, were accessories to the present burthens; and did great damage in destroying their houses, furniture, &c., and irreparable damage in destroying their papers. Both parties, who before had acted separately, then unitedly proceeded to the Chief-Justice's \* house, who, not expecting them, was unattended by his friends, who might have assisted, or proved his innocence. In this situation, all his family, it is said, abandoned the house, but himself and his eldest daughter, whom he repeatedly begged to depart; but as he found all ineffectual, and her resolution fixed to stay and share his fate, with a tumult of passions only to be imagined, he took her in his arms, and carried her to a place of safety, just before the incensed mob arrived. This filial affection saved, it is more than probable, his life. Thus unexpected, and nothing removed from the house, an ample field offered to satiate, if possible, this rage-intoxicated rabble. They beset the house on all sides, and soon destroyed every thing of value: †—

“Furor arma ministrat.” — *Virgil*.

The destruction was really amazing; for it was equal to the fury of the onset. But what above all is to be lamented is the loss of some of the most valuable records of the country, and other ancient papers; for, as his Honor was continuing his history, the oldest and most important writings and records of the Province, which he had selected with great care, pains, and expense, were in his possession. This is a loss greatly to be deplored, as it is absolutely irretrievable.

The distress a man must feel on such an occasion can only be conceived by those who the next day ‡ saw his Honor the Chief-Justice come into court, with a look big with the greatest

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\* Thomas Hutchinson, Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Province.

† The loss sustained by the Chief-Justice, supposed to be upwards of £3,000 sterling; afterwards estimated by the Council Committee at £2,376. 13s. 4d. sterling.

‡ First day of the Superior Court's sitting.

anxiety, clothed in a manner which would have excited compassion from the hardest heart, though his dress had not been strikingly contrasted by the other judges and bar, who appeared in their robes. Such a man in such a station, thus habited, with tears starting from his eyes, and a countenance which strongly told the inward anguish of his soul,—what must an audience have felt, whose compassion had before been moved by what they knew he had suffered, when they heard him pronounce the following words in a manner which the agitations of his mind dictated?

AUGUST TERM, 3 George III. in B. R., &c. — Present: The Hon. Thomas Hutchinson, Esq., Chief-Justice; John Cushing, Peter Oliver, Esqs., Justices.

The Chief-Justice, addressing the whole court, said, —

“GENTLEMEN, — There not being a quorum of the court without me, I am obliged to appear. Some apology is necessary for my dress: indeed, I had no other. Destitute of every thing, — no other shirt; no other garment but what I have on; and not one in my whole family in a better situation than myself. The distress of a whole family around me, young and tender infants hanging about me, are infinitely more insupportable than what I feel for myself, though I am obliged to borrow part of *this* clothing.

“Sensible that I am innocent, that all the charges against me are false, I can’t help feeling: and though I am not obliged to give an answer to all the questions that may be put me by every lawless person, yet I call God to witness, — and I would not, for a thousand worlds, call my Maker to witness to falsehood, — I say, I call my Maker to witness, that I never, in New England or Old, in Great Britain or America, neither directly nor indirectly, was aiding, assisting, or supporting — in the least promoting or encouraging — what is commonly called the Stamp Act; but, on the contrary, did all in my power, and strove as much as in me lay, to prevent it. This is not declared through timidity; for I have nothing to fear. They can only take away my life, which is of but little value when deprived of all its comforts, all that was dear to me, and nothing surrounding me but the most piercing distress.

"I hope the eyes of the people will be opened, that they will see how easy it is for some designing, wicked man to spread false reports, to raise suspicions and jealousies in the minds of the populace, and enrage them against the innocent; but, if guilty, this is not the way to proceed. The laws of our country are open to punish those who have offended. This destroying all peace and order of the community, —all will feel its effects; and I hope all will see how easily the people may be deluded, inflamed, and carried away with madness against an innocent man.

"I pray God give us better hearts!"

The court was then adjourned, on account of the riotous disorders of the preceding night, and universal confusion of the town, to the 15th of October following.

Learn wisdom from the present times! O ye sons of Ambition! beware lest a thirst of power prompt you to enslave your country! O ye sons of Avarice! beware lest the thirst for gold excite you to enslave your native country! O ye sons of Popularity! beware lest a thirst for applause move you groundlessly to inflame the minds of the people! For the end of slavery is misery to the world, your country, fellow-citizens, and children; the end of popular rage, destruction, desolation, and ruin.

Who, that sees the fury and instability of the populace, but would seek protection under the arm of power? Who, that beholds the tyranny and oppression of arbitrary power, but would lose his life in defence of his liberty? Who, that marks the riotous tumult, confusion, and uproar of a democratic, the slavery and distress of a despotic, state, — the infinite miseries attendant on both, — but would fly for refuge from the mad rage of the one, and oppressive power of the other, to that best asylum, that glorious medium, the British Constitution? Happy people who enjoy this blessed constitution! Happy, thrice happy people, if ye preserve it inviolate! May ye never lose it through a licentious abuse of your invaluable rights and blood-purchased liberties! May

ye never forfeit it by a tame and infamous submission to the yoke of slavery and lawless despotism.!

“Remember, O my friends! the laws, the rights,  
The generous plan of power delivered down,  
From age to age, by your renowned forefathers,  
So dearly bought, the price of so much blood:  
Oh! let it never perish in your hands,  
But piously transmit it to your children.  
Do thou, great Liberty! inspire our souls,  
And make our lives in thy possession happy,  
Or our death glorious in thy just defence.”

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An interesting conversation ensued relating to the battle of Lexington, in which Messrs. Washburn, Sibley, Paige, Ellis, R. Frothingham, jun., Adams, Savage, and Sabine participated.

On motion of Mr. LIVERMORE, it was unanimously *Voted*, That the Standing Committee have full authority to publish such a selection from the recent Proceedings of the Society as they may deem to be of general interest.

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#### MAY MEETING.

The Society held its stated monthly meeting on Thursday, May 13, at twelve o'clock, M., at their rooms in Tremont Street, Boston; the President, Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, in the chair.

The Librarian announced donations from the Chicago Historical Society; the Maryland Historical Society; the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Samuel A. Green, M.D.; L. A. Huguet Latour, Esq.; B. P. Johnson, Esq.; William Menzies, Esq.; William H. Polk,